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that are unaffiliated. They're either registered as independent, sometimes they register as simply unaffiliated or there are some other parties. But they can vote, in the primaries, for federal elections, for federal offices, but federal offices only. If you're an independent you can't vote in a partisan election for a county official. You can't vote in a partisan election for a state official or other elected officials, only a federal official. The bill that I'm proposing would allow those persons to declare, at the time they come to the polls, the primary that they wish to participate in. This isn't a unique idea. It is accomplished in other states. And contrary, I think, to the kinds of e-mails that you may have been receiving from county clerks, I do not think it would bring chaos to the election process, certainly no more chaos than is certainly...than is of currently pertained, when unaffiliated or independent voters can choose which of the parties they wish to participate in the primary for as they elect federal candidates. So at the present moment everybody has to separate out the federal candidates from everybody else and treat them differently than others. Seems to me that would be a little bit confusing. But why am I concerned about the independent voters? Well, they just happen to be the fastest growing category of voters in the state of Nebraska. They have a tremendous rate of increase. From 1994 to the year 2000, that's the last year we have numbers for, the increase in voter registrations for unaffiliated was 58 percent. The increase for the Republican party was 18 percent. The percentage for the Democratic party was 7 percent. Unaffiliated voters increased by 58 percent. Why would we choose to disenfranchise those unaffiliated voters in county and government primaries when they can participate in federal primaries? Why would we do that? The answer is always that we need to protect the political parties. Well, I have never thought that the political process belonged to the political parties. The political process belongs to the voters. And to suggest, to a substantial number of persons in the state of Nebraska, that they cannot vote...in fact, there were 153,000 of those persons in the year 2000, 153,000 voters were disenfranchised in county and local and state government primaries in the year 2000. Why would we do that in the name of protecting the political parties? The political parties have apparently been unpersuasive to these individuals. They have